

## THE CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5                   1.       A heating attachment for improving uniformity of microwave heating of a food product in a food container, comprising:  
                    a microwave shield of microwave-reflective material; and  
                    an attachment member configured for attaching the shield to a food container in an operative association in which the container is disposed in a heating space  
10       surrounded by the shield such that the shield improves the uniformity of microwave heating of a food product within the container, the heating attachment sufficiently surrounding the container in the operative association to capture the container for promoting breakage of the heating attachment when the container is removed therefrom to inhibit or prevent reuse of the heating attachment.  
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2.       The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the shield in the operative association promotes propagation of microwaves resonant modes during the microwave heating in the food product in the container to improve the uniformity of the heating throughout the food product.  
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3.       The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the shield extends about a periphery of the container in the operative association.
4.       The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the heating attachment  
25       has a packaging configuration for facilitating packaging thereof, and an expanded configuration for placement in the operative association, wherein the heating attachment in the packaging configuration has a lower volume than in the expanded configuration.
5.       The heating attachment of claim 1, further comprising a support  
30       member that captures the container in the operative association to promote breakage of at least a portion of the support member when the container is removed therefrom.

6. The heating attachment of claim 5, wherein the support member extends beneath the container in the operative association to hold the container elevated above a microwave oven floor during the microwave heating.
- 5 7. The heating attachment of claim 5, wherein the support member is configured for tearing to remove the container from the heating attachment.
8. The heating attachment of claim 5, wherein the support member and shield comprise a packaging configuration and an expanded configuration, and the  
10 heating attachment is configured for folding to move between the packaging and expanded configurations.
9. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the heating member comprises first and second portions that are attached to each other around the container in  
15 the operative association to trap the container in the heating space.
10. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the attachment member comprises a ledge for positively trapping the container in the heating space in the  
operative association.
- 20 11. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the shield is configured for breaking upon removal of the container from the cradle.
12. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the shield in the  
25 operative association is configured to generate a microwave resonating layer having a generally horizontal length of up to about 15 cm, a generally horizontal width of up to about 20 cm, and a generally vertical height of between about 1 and 6 cm.
13. The heating attachment of claim 12, wherein the resonating layer is  
30 arranged so that TE modes predominantly supported within the food product are  $TE_{n,m,l}$  modes, where  $n, m, l$  are such that  $0 \leq n \leq 2$ ,  $0 \leq m \leq 1$  and  $0 \leq l \leq 1$ .

14. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein in the operative association, a bottom side of the heating space is substantially free of the microwave reflective material.

5 15. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the container comprises a dish or bowl for consumption of a food portion.

16. The heating attachment of claim 1, wherein the shield is disposed adjacent a sidewall of the container in the operative association.  
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17. A heating assembly, comprising the heating attachment and container of claim 1.

18. The heating assembly of claim 17, wherein the container is made of  
15 a ceramic or plastic material.

19. A packaged unit, comprising:  
the heating assembly of claim 1;  
a frozen food product configured and dimensioned for reception in the  
20 container for microwave heating; and  
a package containing the heating assembly and frozen food product.

20. The packaged unit of claim 19, wherein the package contains a plurality of frozen food products and at least one heating assembly per frozen food  
25 product contained in the package.